

M G A W

November 2001

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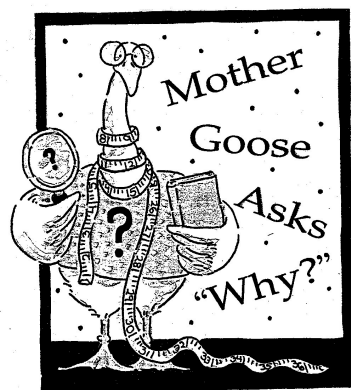
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VISTA Assistant

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Remarks: RI State Coordinator

Melody Lloyd Allen

Outside we searched for items that matched the colors on paint sample cards – leaves, moss, twigs, berries. We found out how many shades of green there are and that in fall blues are much harder to locate than reds. We hunted through an area of shrubs for objects that did not belong in the natural world – an “I Spy” game. Nude trees posed for us – not to see how good we were as artists, but to see how observant we were. Our *Mother Goose Asks “Why?”* science process skills were coming in handy at this *Mother Goose Meets Mother Nature* workshop led by Lynn Murphy of Child, Inc. (Kent County Head Start).

Indoors we used predicting skills to determine which items would float and which would sink. The cheerios, no matter how soggy, never sank. It was fun to match a pattern card with the pattern on an animal as depicted in *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain*.

Familiar and new books led to discussions about habitat, cycles, and caring for the environment. One group liked the fuzzy openness of *Pumpkin, Pumpkin*, and another group preferred the detail and clarity of *Monarch Butterfly*. Very different moods were created by *Secret Place* and *Flower Garden* in depicting natural areas in the city.

Salamander Room and *Tadpoles* raised questions about taking creatures from the wild. The first book asked wonderful questions on the needs of the salamander, and the second showed how young children can study animals up close and then return them to the wild. Lynn recommended reading books more than once, possibly before and after activities, to give children an opportunity to see and respond to them more fully.

Lynn closed the well-planned, well-paced day with an exchange on how librarians can use this program. Books and activities could be integrated into story hours and used for programs for the primary grade set. Include parents in these programs, so that the librarian can model sharing books and exploring the environment. Alternative books, as well as extra copies of books used in the sessions, can be checked out for home use. A book and related activities could be set out in a drop-in work area. For instance, kids could work independently on the “puzzle” of placing cards with the various stages of a tree’s development in sequence. Another suggestion was to make kits for loan with a book or two and related activities described on cards, with materials included when appropriate.

As in *MGAW*, it is critical that the basic principles carry over into adaptations. Encourage curiosity and exploration, emphasize verbal interchanges and vocabulary development, and follow the child’s lead, with open-ended questions expanding the investigation. Focusing with kids on respect for living things can change your life. In 1970, at my first story hour, I read *Be Nice to Spiders*, and ever since, I have had a crisis of conscience over coping with spiders that invade my house. Respect also means being watchful about picking flowers and disturbing animals. Some resources providing guidance are *Play Lightly on the Earth: Nature Activities for Children 3 to 9 Years Old*, by Jacqueline Horsfall and *Science Activities Pre-K – 3: The Leaves Are Falling in Rainbows*, by Terry Graham and Michael Knight.

MGAW TEAM REPORT

Kathy Ryan shares her perspective on the You Can Count on Mother Goose Training in Washington, D.C.

We All Are Mathematicians--We Do Math Every Day

Unlike another member of my team, math was not a breeze for me. I reversed numbers and found math bedeviling. In Geometry, I had a teacher who would not let me fail. Although my grade was low, she passed me. In March of my sophomore year in high school, something 'clicked'. I became a tutor for other students. In June, not one of the 90 students in our class failed a New York Regents Examination that the State considered dropping because of its difficulty. 30 of us earned grades of 90 or above. My average had gone from 45% to 98%.

My biggest surprise at the *You Can Count on Mother Goose* training came during the challenge of listing and charting the number of math activities we had done between waking and attending the morning's session. I redid the activity today, because it still amazes me.

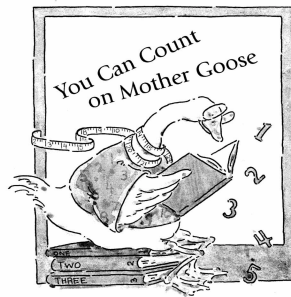
On a typical Friday, I woke to an alarm on a digital clock, which I reset to 'snooze', estimating how much time there was to doze. When I could delay no longer, I eyeballed the amount of toothpaste for my brush, and checked tablets against bottles to be sure I had taken my vitamins. My husband and I split a breakfast shake into which he had measured 2 cups of milk, 2 scoops of soy protein powder, a large banana, and a tablespoon of peanut butter.

Did I have enough gas to get to work, or would I have to stop? Did the nearer station have the better price? Was I within the speed limit as I saw the flashing blue lights ahead? Was there enough braking distance on the highway between my car and the SUV ahead of me? The rain wipers made a swish/ ahhh, swish/ ahhh sound-pattern on the windshield. How many cars were in the lot? Was there enough space between those cars on my left for me to park?

The day had a flow: work, break, work, lunch, work, break, work. Was the schedule accurate for the next month? Were the statistics for this month higher or lower than for last? [Was it time for lunch?] How many books could fit in the box for a visit to a preschool? And when I left, did I have as many as I brought?

The change to Eastern Standard time meant there was less daylight. As the sky darkened, I crossed several town boundaries and a river on the way home. I was pulled over and received a summons to have 1 headlight replaced.

My favorite television show PROVIDENCE was on at 8 pm. I had enough time to match socks and sort the rest of the laundry as well as to check my e-mail to be sure I hadn't exceeded the amount of memory allowed by Hotmail. The rhythms of the bodhran and the uilleann pipes were as soothing as heartbeats. I wished I knew the patterns of step dancing.



Before I knew it, PROVIDENCE was over and Syd had pulled through another Hansen family crisis. I'm not sure I'd enjoy the show daily, but week-long intervals were good.

So, what kinds of math did I do? And how much of it used numbers? Try to make a chart for my day or your own day using these categories:
Patterns and Relationships
Numbers and Counting
Shapes and Spaces
Measuring.

I'll wager you and your patrons/clients will be surprised at how much math you use as well. We'll have fun counting on Mother Goose--and then some!

Finally, Melody Allen adds her impressions of the training.

What I Did in D.C.

When I first worked in a library, I had to file cards in the catalog. I thought this would be so easy – just put them in alphabetical order. I was so innocent. In addition to cutting all my cuticles, I found out that it was not as simple as I expected. Where do the names that begin with Mc or de go? Where do you put 1984?

I should have remembered about the alphabet when we started measuring at the *You Can Count on Mother Goose* training. Okay, so I was a little rigid in making my measuring instrument. We were given a pipe cleaner and a straw to cut into about one inch lengths. Just slip the straw pieces over the pipe cleaner and you have a measuring instrument. Of course, I immediately saw this as a ruler and taped it all to be a rigid foot-long length. Soon I realized that the point was to have a flexible measuring tool that could bend around curved surfaces like an object or pictures in a book. That inchworm in Leo Lionni's *Inch by Inch* had it easy, which is probably why we chose the Inchworm song made famous by Danny Kaye our theme song for YCCoMG.

I was struck by how closely the books in this program matched up with the activities. We could actually measure the illustrations along with the inchworm. We walked along with *Jonathan and His Mommy*, doing the same zigzag walk and bunny steps. Too bad they couldn't do the different ways of walking that we made up. There was so much to do holding onto *10 Minutes till Bedtime* that activities are found right inside the book, especially counting fun. Shape walks are directly suggested by reading *The Shape of Things* and *Taking a Walk/ Caminado*.

As described in the last issue, *Lottie's New Beach Towel* introduced the heart of math – problem solving. It was very challenging to move beyond identifying the problems Lottie solved in the book to contemplating other problems that could have resulted as part of her trip to the beach. Remember algebra – stating the problem can be more difficult than solving it.

If you are interested in YCCoMG, there will be a training session on March 25 at the Providence Public Library. Watch for more information.

MGAW Sites Across The Country

Susan Morris

**Early Childhood Specialist
Howard County Library
Columbia Maryland**

In Maryland, our partners have been Title I and Head Start. The second year of the grant we gained as a partner *Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab* who provided Marc Clayton.

Our response to learning about having Marc join our team was a little schizophrenic – Wow! Great! We'll have a real live scientist to work with and learn from! Oh no! I hope he doesn't use too many big words and intimidate the parents! For those of you who have participated in the "*Mother Goose Asks Why?*" trainings, you know the mantra: "We are all scientists...we are all doing science ...all the time."

After the first year of presenting the training we were so impressed with the power of the "*Mother Goose Asks Why?*" training- we got it! he parents got it! We didn't want to lose that. We shouldn't have worried.

Marc has been a completely non-intimidating member of our team. He has not been an official "presenter" for any of the series of programs, but he has attended many sessions and has contributed greatly to the success of our programs by being so full of curiosity and knowledge.

Marc has also contributed to our team effort by presenting a "science show" as a big end-of-the-year family program for all families that have participated during the year.

The show was entertaining and informative for all ages – toddlers to grandparents. It reminded me of the Mr. Wizard television show (for those of you who are old enough to remember), but with pizzazz.

This past year we called it "*Mother Goose Asks 'Why?'*" Family Finale" and it was held at Explora World, a former warehouse that's been converted into space for hands-on learning for children and their families.

If you have the opportunity to partner with a scientist in your community go for it! It has been fun and rewarding for us.

FAMILY LITERACY FORUM

by Melody Allen

Parents make a difference. I have heard testimonials from three children's book authors/illustrators to support this.

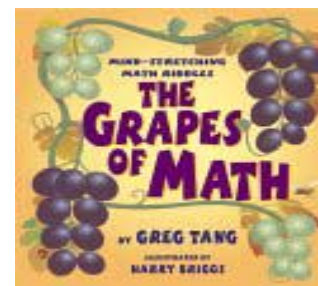
I attended the ceremony for the 2001 Rhode Island Children's Book Award at the Forest Avenue School in Middletown, RI. Kevin Hawkes, illustrator of the winning book, *Weslandia*, was regaled by children in grades 3 and 4 who were impressed by the main character's creation of his own civilization in his backyard. Hawkes credited his parents because, however reluctant at times, they did allow him to use a variety of materials and have space to work on art projects around the house when he was a kid.

I remember David Macaulay making similar remarks, thanking his parents for their willingness to allow him as a child to build constructions such as cable cars in their house. His projects involved both noise and messes, but he was given time and space to be inventive and figure out how things work.

Recently, I heard a TV program featuring Maine authors. Ashley Bryan described his first book, an alphabet book, "published" in Kindergarten. When he took it home, his family gave him rave reviews. This positive response encouraged him to make more little books. His mother, who came from Antigua, sang all the time, which must have impacted his collections of African American spirituals and his expressive oral renditions of poems by African Americans. He told how his mother loved flowers and had a plant in every sunny spot and made crepe paper flowers to brighten the dark corners of their home. This influence is reflected in his bright and swirling art. Bryan says at the Children's Book Council web site, "I grew up in a large family during the Great Depression. The family funds for books were limited, but there were always stacks of books in the home. My brothers, sisters and I saw to that. We borrowed books from the Public Library. We made book cases out of discarded orange crates and placed the books on these shelves so that we could share them and keep track of them. It made us feel that we had our own home library, a wonderful feeling."

Unstructured time, space, inexpensive materials, patience, valuing and encouragement are some of the ingredients parents can contribute to their child's development. Art, projects, play, all provide opportunities for conversations and story making, i.e. oral language development.

Feature Books



The Grapes of Math by Greg Tang

A wonderful addition to your library, as this book provides a creative look at math. At first glance, I found the illustrations very colorful to captivate the child. The answers to the math riddles (in the back of the book) made me see the drawings in their separateness and as a whole.

IN THE NEWS!!

by Priscilla Tremblay

A VISIT TO CHILDSPAN

On October 30th, I had the pleasure of visiting with Mother Goose team member, Joseph Morra, Library & Literacy Specialist at CHILDSPAN for a tour of the site located at 500 Prospect Street in Pawtucket, RI.

I was amazed at the vast resources available to parents and professionals in the Rhode Island area. An extensive library of books, videos, and activities, is well organized and available for borrowing privileges.

Whether you are an in-home provider for young children or work in Head Start programs within the school system of RI, or even a parent who cares for your own, there is something for everyone at CHILDSPAN to enrich your time with a child.

**For more information,
Call CHILDSPAN at (401) 729-0765,
located at 500 Prospect Street in
Pawtucket, RI 02861**

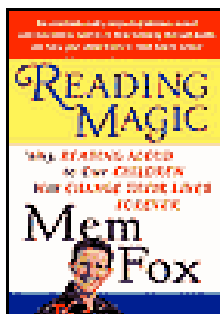
PROFESSIONAL BOOKS



Origins of Story On Writing for Children

Edited by Barbara Harrison and Gregory Maguire

In 1987, *Children's Literature New England* was founded and has since met annually across America to discuss books remarkable in narrative structure as well as their insight into children's lives. The essays in *Origins of Story* represent some of the themes of programs sponsored by CLNE, to reflect the concerns of children as expressed in the books written for them. Realizing that we have much to learn from literature that mirrors the lives of children, these writers carefully consider how literature, memory and moral passion serve the writer. Asserting that the best of children's stories are metaphors to live by, you may find this a welcome edition to your professional library!



Reading Magic; Why Reading Aloud to Our Children Will Change Their Lives Forever by Mem Fox

In a cheerful, chatty style that's totally jargon-free, children's picture book

author, Fox makes a passionate case for reading aloud to children "as long as they'll let us, even after they can finally read themselves." Her small, spacious book is no pedagogical tome, although she's fiercely critical of the phonics-only approach to literacy and the "See Spot run" kind of basal readers. Instead, she conveys her wild enthusiasm for reading aloud the best children's books, reading them over and over again, the love of words that is the best step into reading. Her examples are personal, many from her own family and friends and from her own books, and occasional cartoons by Judy Horacek add to the fun. Give this to new parents and also to the many teachers and children's librarians who will appreciate the joyful talk about what they do.

WEBSITES TO WANDER

www.geocities.com/dimatulka

Using the CLN (Children's Literature Navigator), you will find 600 incredibly vast links to resources for librarians, parents, teachers and children.

www.zerotothree.org

A wonderful array of topics available bridging the gap in the fields of child development, medicine, mental health, science, research, and so much more!

www.bookstorereading.org

The site of the International Reading Association lists numerous professional references that will provide many an interesting read!

Best Wishes

As we are partnered with Rhode Island Reads, the **Vista Leader Melissa Given** has left her post on November 16th, 2001 and moving back to her home state of Texas. A fond farewell to Melissa and best wishes for future success.



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